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ily, and we can hardly suppose that a signet ring that alone could have been sold for a competent living would have been conferred on a nobody.

In goblet, in bottle, and in ring we have Khamwast's souvenirs of the great experiment, from its inception, its momentary success, and its failure. It is worth remembering when we look at them in their museum cases.

H. E. W.

the design; the chiseler reproduced it in metal, cunningly using different metals to achieve the color effects; and the lacquerer supplied the scabbard and frequently some of the fittings, when these were of wood. The result was a distinct contribution to the world's art treasures.

By decoration of the "sword" is meant the decoration of its hilt and scabbard; comprising, besides the guard, certain other



FIG. 3. DECANTER OF FAIENCE

### AN EXHIBITION OF JAPANESE SWORD MOUNTS

ART, in its broad sense, is an expression of the race, not of the individual artist. Perhaps no better illustration of this can be instanced regarding the Japanese than in the decoration of the sword, elegant in the beginning, and highly specialized at the close, of its long history. Painter, chiseler, and lacquerer—representing three preëminent fields of Japanese art—collaborated in this decoration. The painter furnished

accessories and ornaments—collectively referred to by the Japanese as *kodogu* (small fittings)—for the two swords usually worn by the *samurai* (the *katana* and the *wakizashi*), and for the ceremonial or court sword (the *tachi*)—the corresponding Japanese term for which is *kanagu* (metal fittings). Into this decoration was woven the legend, history, and folk-lore of the people, as well as the sentimental reactions to the beauties of nature often so charmingly expressed in the thatched hut near the stream, with its water-wheel; the swaying flower, tossed

by the wind; or the flight of wild geese through the moonlit night.

An exhibition of these small fittings or mounts has just been placed on view,<sup>1</sup> comprising representative specimens borrowed by the Museum from the collections of certain specialists and collectors among the members of the Armor and Arms Club. It is worthy of repeated visits and careful study, not only for its general artistic and educational value, but for the reason that its size, scope, and variety afford an opportunity to compare the work of famous artists through different and numerous examples rarely to be seen except in such an aggregate from private collections.

As a whole, the exhibition consists of some four hundred and fifty items, covering over six hundred pieces. They range from the productions of the Kaneiyé, in the sixteenth century, to those of Gotō Ichijō and Kanō Natsuō—two famous masters of the nineteenth—who survived their profession when political changes deprived the *samurai* of his privilege of carrying swords, and thus brought to an end the former wide demand for fittings. The objects, in the main, are the knife-handle (*kozuka*), the ring and the tip (*fuchi-kashira*) for the hilt, and those unique and beautiful ornaments for the sides of the hilt called *menuki*. The materials of which these pieces are made—besides *shakudo* and *shibuichi*, the characteristic alloys peculiar to the Japanese—comprise gold, silver, bronze, copper, iron, enamel (*shippo*), ebony, lacquer, ivory, and bone.

Its scope is indicated by the various families and schools of metal-workers represented, which includes, besides the Kaneiyé, the Umetada (with the Shōami, Sōten, and Itō); the Gotō (with the Ichinomiya and Ichijō schools); the Nara (with the Ōmori and the Hamano); the Nomura (with the Isono); the Yokoya and its derivatives: the Yoshioka, Iwamoto, Furukawa, Yanagawa, Kikuoka, Ishiguro, Tanaka of Yedo, Tsuji of Omi, Sekijōken, Kikuchi, and Yegawa. The schools of Mito show examples of the Tamagawa, Uchikoshi, Hitotsuyanagi, and Hirano. Besides these, the Ōtsuki school of Kyōto and various

individual workers like Hosono Masamori—personal in style and execution—also appear to advantage.

Remarkable for their rare quality are the specimens of *mokume* and *guri*. *Mokume* (wood grain) is a result of soldering two or more alloys together, beating, twisting, and finally cutting them in veneers which show characteristic colors of the alloys when suitably treated in a "pickle." Seen for the first time, it is difficult to realize that the result is not brought about by means of inlay, or through some coloring process. *Guri* is a metallic imitation of *guri* lacquer.

Perhaps the collector will find special interest in the pieces of the Gotō school, of Sōyō and Sōmin of the Yokoya, Jōi of the Nara, and Natsuō of the Ōtsuki, because of their quality, number, and variety, but more particularly because of the workmanship. Design, however, will make a wider appeal to the general visitor than subtle beauties of chisel-work, and here the field is broad and suggestive.

One is impressed with the quiet dignity of the iron fittings of the Kaneiyé. The fisherman, bending over the side of his boat, floating near the reeds (No. 2), is modeled with grace and fidelity. Something of this same quality is noticed also in an iron *kozuka* of the Inouye school depicting Tōba, a Chinese official of the eleventh century, with large hat and staff.

Of exceptional interest is a *shakudo kozuka* by the thirteenth Gotō master, who has placed thereon five golden *shishi* (mythical lions), originally made as *menuki*, by his ancestors the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth masters, which afford an unusual opportunity for comparison. These animals, so playful and full of life, seem here to reflect little of the sober poise of their original Chinese habitat. Unusual also is the set of pieces by a pupil of the fifteenth Gotō master, showing wind-blown, blossoming peonies. Tōmei, who studied with and under the Gotō, depicts with almost microscopic precision the heads of millet, working with marvelous detail, in gold. A set signed by Gotō Masayasu, consisting of a *kozuka* and a pair of *menuki*, shows the Six Immortal Poets of Japan.

In the Nara group are seen Daruma, the

<sup>1</sup>In Wing H, Room 6.

ascetic monk; Kwanyu, the Chinese general; Shinnō, the mystic; Hotei, one of the household gods; Dancing Shojo, those mythical, red-headed lovers of saké! All of these subjects are familiar to every Japanese child. There is also a ghost motif which for delicacy, suggestiveness, and restrained power is an achievement of great merit.

Among the pieces of the Ōmori are typical wave designs, remarkably undercut, and a carp ascending a waterfall.

In the Hamano group, a pair of hands placed together on the face of a *kozuka* give

under a full moon, is by one of the famous Hirata school, noted for its beautiful productions of enamel, or *shippo*.

Two mice, masterly executed with a few strokes of the chisel; the Goddess Kwannon, seated on a rock; a carp leaping from the water after a hornet; and a goldfish are fine examples of Natsuō.

Japanese humor is shown in a *kozuka* of yellow bronze of the Ōtsuki school, the subject of which, in delicate lines of chisel-work, is two men drinking and apparently quite convivial. The accompanying poem



CHARACTERISTIC WORK OF TOMEI  
GODA COLLECTION

little clue to design until the back is seen. There, on a silver ground, is the black shadow of a rabbit; produced, of course, by the hands on the other side!

A set, consisting of *kozuka*, *kogai*, and two pair of *menuki*, is decorated with the crawfish motif of the Nomura, the *menuki* representing single crawfish.

The Yokoya school has Chōkwaro, a *sennin*, or religious recluse; Ebisu, another of the household gods; and Shōki, a powerful deity charged with the important duty of quelling demons, who rides majestically on a lion.

Crows, in black, against a full moon of silver, are the work of the Tsuji; and a *kozuka*, showing the flight of wild geese

gives a characteristic touch. It may be rendered: "Drinking enough *saké* makes the mind like a day in spring and, until a creditor appears, it has the voice of a nightingale."

In a group of gold *menuki* are such subjects as warriors on horseback; lions and clouds; Bishamon, the God of War, chasing a demon; Marishiten, the deity of Brahmanic origin, mounted on a wild boar; Sambaso dancers; a stork standing on one leg; and a monkey stretching its long arm upwards, reaching for the moon. This last is a symbol of man striving for the impossible—not inappropriate, perhaps, if applied to one attempting a description of the present collection to those unfamiliar

with this intricate and highly developed branch of Japanese art; for it must be seen to be appreciated.

We can thus see in this exhibition an artistic expression of Japanese ideals. The individual artist makes a common appeal to the race for the reason that, in a sense, he is the interpreter of its own thought. His message now goes beyond the boundaries of the Island Empire and transmits to the people of a western world, undreamed of at the time, something of the spirit which gave inspiration to brush and chisel in an age that is all too quickly fading into the shadows of the past.

ROBERT HAMILTON RUCKER.

## A FIFTEENTH-CENTURY MADONNA

ALBERT VAN OUWATER, to whom a lately acquired Madonna and Child<sup>1</sup> is attributed by distinguished authorities,<sup>2</sup> is a shadowy figure in the history of art. His name comes down to us in Van Mander's *Book of the Painters*, where he is spoken of with respect as one clever at painting heads, hands, draperies, and landscape. The author was familiar with one of the artist's paintings—an altarpiece (which has since disappeared) in the great church in Haarlem. This was called the Roman altarpiece because it had been erected by pilgrims on their return from Rome. He also mentions another work by van Ouwater, the Raising of Lazarus, which he knew by means of a copy in monochrome, the original having been looted by the Spaniards at the siege of Haarlem in 1573 and carried away into Spain. "This," says Van Mander, "is all that time has preserved for us of this old master to save his name from oblivion."

It was in 1604 that these words were written. The original of the Raising of Lazarus came to light in recent years, in the possession of a Genoese family, and has since found its way into the Kaiser Fried-

rich Museum in Berlin. On the basis of its similarity to this one known work by him, our Madonna is ascribed to the same artist. The resemblance in certain forms is remarkable. Sir Martin Conway points out that the features of the Virgin are practically a reproduction of those of the Christ in the Berlin example. Our panel, however, with its rich crimsons and golden browns is more colorful than the other, which is indeed somewhat cold and dry in effect.

Whether it be ultimately decided that it is by van Ouwater or not, our Madonna and Child is undoubtedly a very attractive example of the early Dutch school in an almost faultless state of preservation. Its date should be placed somewhere in the last quarter of the fifteenth century. The mediaeval art of Flanders was well on its road to modernism when painting in Holland began. Dirk Bouts, the most important fifteenth-century Dutch painter, passed his career in Flanders. Our painting shows some of the traits of this master, the most prominent of which is a matter-of-fact determination to draw types from contemporary life rather than from foreign pictures or from some preconceived ideal of beauty or expression. The Christ child in our picture is a striking example of this characteristic. The square-headed, stiff-limbed little figure bears all the marks of being an accurate portrait of a Dutch baby. The Madonna, though her expression is more idealized, is also distinctly Netherlandish. The painting of her rich costume is derived from the work of the Van Eycks or their pupils. The landscape<sup>3</sup> is founded on the landscapes that appear in the backgrounds of Italian pictures. It is a Swiss view, one would say, of a mountain lake, a high cliff, and at its base a castle reached by a wooden causeway. Although various influences appear in the work, the artist's personality is clearly expressed. He is revealed in it as a skilful and painstaking artist of an earnest and straightforward type of mind.

B. B.

<sup>1</sup> Panel; H. 15 $\frac{5}{8}$ , W. 12 $\frac{1}{8}$  in. In Gallery 34.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Martin Conway and Dr. Tancred Borenius. See an article by the former in the *Burlington Magazine*, March, 1922.

<sup>3</sup> "The oldest painters," says Van Mander, "are of the opinion that the correct manner of treating landscape was first adopted in Haarlem."